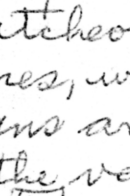
Escutcheon of Hagsfeld

Each city, town, or village in Germany had its own escutcheon (Wappenschild). The design and colors of the escutcheon of a city, town, or village was seldom related to that of the county or country in which the community was located. They were essentially independent. These local escutcheons were not used on armor. They were used from early times until the 19th century on the boundary stones of the territory belonging to a village. (This is similar to both the north line and west line boundaries between Pennsylvania and Maryland surveyed by Mason and Dixon in the 1760s. These lines have, at about five mile intervals, marker stones with the coat of arms of the Penns on one side and that of the Calverts on the other.) Generally, the villagers in Germany were proud of their own escutcheons, so that they often placed it on their homes, wagons, and other possessions. At present, the designs are incorporated in the insignia or legal seals of the various communities.

The basic form of the escutcheon of Hagsfeld is this:  . It is still used as shown in the accompanying issue of the Hagsfelder Bürgerblatt, a bimonthly magazine for the people of Karlsruhe.

The significance of this design is uncertain. One guess is that it was the personal sign of an early settler, indicating that he had roots in the field (feld) at that place. It is much more likely, however, that it is a Germanic runic letter that has been handed down from ancient times on the old boundary stones.

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